

Message Text

SECRET

PAGE 01 STATE 107793 TOSEC 040200
ORIGIN SS-15

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APPROVED BY: NEA:EGABINGTON

S/S-O:SSTEINER

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO USDEL SECRETARY IMMEDIATE

S E C R E T STATE 107793 TOSEC 040200

EXDIS

FOLLOWING REPEAT CAIRO 7983 ACTION SECSTATE INFO
BAGHDAD DTD 11 MAY

QTE

S E C R E T CAIRO 7983

EXDIS

DEPT PASS SECRETARY FROM AMBASSADOR

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, IZ, US

SUBJECT: IMPROVING RELATIONS WITH IRAQ

REF (A) STATE 106253 (TOSEC 40168), (B) CAIRO 7853

1. SPOKE TO FAHMY TODAY MAKING POINTS CONTAINED REFTEL.

I EXPLAINED NO RESPONSE YET RECEIVED FROM IRAQIS RE

UNDERSEC HABIB'S PROPOSED VISIT TO BAGHDAD, BUT WE

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WOULD KEEP GOE INFORMED ABOUT DEVELOPMENTS.

2. FAHMY OPINED WE WILL NOT GET AN ANSWER FROM GOI.

IN HIS VIEW, WE HAD MADE TWO MISTAKES: FIRST, AT VERY

TIME IRAQIS INDICATED INTEREST IN IMPROVING RELATIONS,

WE HAD PUBLICLY CITED THEM IN LETTER TO SENATOR JAVITS

FOR SUPPORTING TERRORISM. WHETHER RIGHT OR WRONG, AND

FAHMY DID NOT QUESTION THAT THE IRAQIS ARE DOING SO, THIS ACTION WILL GET UP IRAQI DANDER. SECOND, WITHOUT ANY REFLECTION ON HABIB, WE SHOULD HAVE PROPOSED THAT SECRETARY VANCE VISITED BAGHDAD. IF THIS WERE DONE, FAHMY SAID, SADDAM HUSSEIN'S RESPONSE WOULD BE POSITIVE. FAHMY THOUGHT THAT STOPOVER BY THE SECRETARY ESPECIALLY DESIRABLE AFTER USG'S "FLIRTING" WITH ASAD, WHICH MAKES IRAQIS SUSPICIOUS.

3. TO UNDO DAMAGE CAUSED BY THE DEPT'S LETTER TO SENATOR JAVITS, FAHMY PROPOSED THAT USINT BAGHDAD BE INSTRUCTED WITHOUT DELAY TO EXPLAIN TO HIGHEST LEVEL IRAQI OFFICIAL AVAILABLE WHY WE HAD HAD TO MAKE SUCH AN ANNOUNCEMENT. IF PERSUASIVE, THIS WOULD HELP TO "ERASE" BAD EFFECT OF DEPT'S ANNOUNCEMENT. IF SUCH AN EXPLANATION COULD BE ACCOMPANIED BY AN OFFER THAT SECRETARY WILLING STOPOVER IN BAGHDAD, THIS WOULD PUT THE BALL IN THE IRAQI COURT. IF SADDAM HUSSEIN AGREES, AS FAHMY THOUGHT HE WOULD, IT WOULD BE A BREAK-THROUGH. WHILE SUCH A STOPOVER MIGHT NOT MEAN AN AUTOMATIC ANNOUNCEMENT OF RESUMPTION DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS, IT WOULD BE THE FIRST SIGNIFICANT STEP IN THIS DIRECTION.

4. TOLD FAHMY THAT I DID NOT KNOW WHETHER THE SECRETARY'S TIGHT SCHEDULE WOULD ALLOW SUCH A STOPOVER. MOREOVER, IT CLEARLY DESIRABLE FIRST PROBE IRAQI INTENTIONS THROUGH UNDERSEC HABIB'S PROPOSED VISIT BEFORE ENGAGING SECRETARY'S PRESTIGE. FAHMY COUNTERED THAT, WHILE THIS WOULD EARLIER HAVE BEEN SOUND APPROACH, SITUATION HAD CHANGED IN WAKE
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OF DEPT'S LETTER TO SENATOR JAVITS. SOME EXTRAORDINARY EFFORT NOW NEEDED TO OVERCOME EFFECTS OF THAT LETTER.

5. FAHMY ASKED THAT HIS SUGGESTIONS BE CONVEYED TO THE SECRETARY, WHICH I AGREED TO DO. HE EXPRESSED APPRECIATION FOR OUR WILLINGNESS KEEP EGYPTIANS INFORMED OF DEVELOPMENTS. I AGAIN THANKED HIM FOR EGYPTIAN EFFORTS ON OUR BEHALF.
EILTS UNQTE CHRISTOPHER

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NNN

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